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FACT SHEET

Tsunami Alert Rapid Notification System (TARNS) for Thailand



Fakhruddin, US IOTWS Program

Interagency Coordination Group discussing the Thai early warning system. The TARNS Project will help improve protocols and communications procedures to ensure the people get warnings and move to safety.

What is TARNS?

The Tsunami Alert Rapid Notification System (TARNS) is a set of common protocols and procedures used to ensure that tsunami advisories or warnings are sent from a national focal point to all relevant national and local officials so that the public receives the information quickly and accurately. The Thai National Disaster Warning Center (NDWC) has the lead responsibility to enhance and refine Thailand's national alert rapid notification system. Initially, TARNS will include a quick-response system for tsunami alerts but it will be expanded to include alerts for other disasters as well. A set of common procedures and protocols will be developed for all relevant entities, and will be coordinated based on the government structure, culture, infrastructure, and available technologies.

Government Initiatives for TARNS

On March 24, 2006, the National Disaster Warning Center (NDWC) of Thailand signed a Memorandum of Agreement with The U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDM/A) to enhance the Tsunami Alert Rapid Notification System (TARNS) for Thailand. The TARNS initiative will help NDWC to enhance and implement a robust conceptual plan for adopting the appropriate technologies and procedures to deliver both disaster warnings and "all clear" alerts quickly and efficiently. In addition, nation-wide simulation exercises will be conducted to practice these procedures. Additional technical support will be provided through the USAID-funded U.S. Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Program with experts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service (USDA/FS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).



For more information on TARNs contact

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TARNs System Design and Plan

On May 24-26, 2006, NDWC in collaboration with USAID, USDA/FS, and NOAA, conducted a three-day workshop to enhance development of an interagency communications plan that will improve the delivery of early warnings to people in danger from tsunamis and other hazards. The workshop was the first step to develop a comprehensive end-to-end model extending down to the local level for rapid warning communications during emergency situations. Following the U.S. model, the approach calls for increased coordination at each level of the warning system—national, provincial, and local—to assure warnings are received and processed quickly, as well as enabling emergency managers to prepare for evacuations in times of danger.

Representatives of the Thai Government formed an interim Inter-agency Workgroup, to be chaired by the Vice Minister to the Office of the Prime Minister. The Interagency Workgroup will enhance the interagency coordination for early warning and develop a comprehensive integrated plan for an effective disaster warning dissemination system. Members took initial steps to establish an action plan and strategy for developing the conceptual framework model for TARNs in Thailand. The NDWC is the lead coordinating agency for the Thai government and will work in partnership with the U.S. Government team to help replicate the TARNs approach in other countries across the Indian Ocean Region.

Recent and Upcoming TARNs Activities

May 24-26, 2006:	First TARNs workshop for system design and communications plan
July 25-27, 2006:	Second TARNs workshop for Launching the Framework and Communication Technology and Methodology
August 2006- January 2007:	Field visits at the provincial, district, Sub-District (TAO) and community level to develop robust TARNs
January 2007:	Third TARNs workshop to develop Implementation Plan for the TARNs
Feb/March, 2007:	Full-scale table top exercise of the Implementation Plan
April 2007:	Regional Model showcase of TARNs

About the US Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Program

The US IOTWS Program is part of the international effort to develop tsunami warning system capabilities in the Indian Ocean following the December 2004 tsunami disaster. The US program adopts an “end-to-end” approach—addressing regional, national, and local aspects of a truly functional warning system—along with multiple other hazards that threaten communities in the region. In partnership with the international community, national governments, and other partners, the US program offers technology transfer, training, and information resources to strengthen the tsunami warning and preparedness capabilities of national and local stakeholders in the region. For more information please visit www.us-iotws.gov.

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